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October 31, 2006

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan E. Fielding".

SUBJECT: **LOS ANGELES COUNTY FOOD POLICY**

On August 8, 2006, your Board approved the Los Angeles County Food Policy and instructed my office to: 1) develop an implementation plan and timeline to operationalize the policy and 2) report back to the Board within 90 days. The purpose of the Food Policy is to ensure that County employees and the public have access to healthy food options at County facilities. The policy influences three ways that County employees and the public access food within the County: 1) County-contracted vending machines; 2) County-sponsored meetings and events; and 3) Workplace-based fundraising initiatives.

Process to Develop the Implementation Plan

In order to develop an effective plan, the Department of Public Health (DPH) solicited input from various stakeholders. On September 7, 2006, DPH convened a meeting with representatives from various County departments affected by the policy to discuss potential implementation approaches. County departments that participated in this meeting included: the CAO – Real Estate Division, Parks and Recreation, the Sheriff's Department, Beaches and Harbors, County Counsel, and Public Health. In addition, on September 8, 2006, DPH held a meeting with members of the Physical Activity and Nutrition Task Force (PANTF), the County-Community partnership that developed the Food Policy, to discuss potential implementation strategies.

To obtain additional input from key County departments and learn how food is purchased by County employees, between September 11, 2006 and October 6, 2006, DPH employees spoke with staff at the Board of Supervisors Executive Office – Fiscal Services Division, Auditor-Controller, ISD – Contracting and Purchasing, CAO – Service Integration Branch – Office of Workplace Programs. In addition, DPH researched the efforts of other local governments and organizations to identify best practices and lessons learned relating to the implementation of food policies. The implementation plan integrates input from all these sources.

The second component of the Food Policy mandates that food purchased with County funds and served or offered at County-sponsored meetings or events, meet the nutrition guidelines contained in the Food Policy. One of the key findings of the meetings and phone interviews with County staff, relating to this second component, is that County departments have very limited opportunities to purchase food. Pursuant to Los Angeles County Code section 5.40.097, each County department is allowed to spend \$5,000/year on "incidental expenses". The purchase of food by County departments, in most instances, is permitted only under these incidental expenses. Pursuant to Los Angeles County Code section 5.40.340, the Board of Supervisors is authorized to incur necessary expenses for food at conferences and meetings that are held to conduct County-related business. Given the relatively small sum of money spent on food purchases spread out among many departments, it would be very cumbersome to monitor food expenses. For this reason, we propose an implementation plan that includes educating staff at all the County departments, including the Board of Supervisors' offices, regarding serving healthy food at County-sponsored meetings and events. In addition, we propose to monitor the effectiveness of DPH's educational efforts to inform County employees of the County's Food Policy as detailed in the Implementation and Monitoring Plan.

Key Action Steps in the Implementation Plan

Attached is the implementation plan and timeline for the Los Angeles County Food Policy that were requested by your Board. Significant action steps of the three components of the Policy include the following:

- 1) Vending machines:
 - By April 2007, an education campaign will be developed to inform all County employees about the vending machine component of the Food Policy and the benefits of eating healthy.
 - By April 2007, standard language mandating the inclusion of healthy food and beverage items in vending machines will be developed for insertion into all future Requests For Proposals and vending machine contracts.
- 2) County-sponsored meetings and events:
 - By April 2007, an education campaign will be developed to inform all County employees about the component of the Food Policy dealing with County-sponsored meetings and events.
 - By January 2008, a process will be in place to monitor the effectiveness of educational outreach efforts and assess whether key County employees are aware of and are complying with the Food Policy.
- 3) Charitable fundraising:
 - By February 2008, the County's charitable fundraising coordinators will be educated on the Food Policy and receive a charitable fundraising toolkit.

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DPH will report back to the Board within 90 days of the three target compliance dates established in the Food Policy: January 1, 2007; January 1, 2009; and January 1, 2011.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

JEF:cah
PH:609:007

Attachments

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

Los Angeles County Food Policy: Summary of the Implementation Plan

Overview of the Food Policy

On August 8, 2006, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the Los Angeles County Food Policy. The purpose of the Food Policy is to ensure that County employees and the public have access to healthy food options at County facilities. The policy influences three ways that County employees and the public access food within the County: 1) County-contracted vending machines; 2) County-sponsored meetings and events; and 3) Workplace-based fundraising initiatives.

Process to Develop the Implementation Plan

When the Board of Supervisors approved the Food Policy, it requested that the Department of Public Health (DPH) develop an implementation plan within 90 days, detailing how the policy's three components will be implemented. In order to develop an effective plan, DPH solicited input from various stakeholders by convening meetings with representatives from the County departments affected by the policy, talking with staff at the Office of the Auditor-Controller, ISD and the CAO, and meeting with members of the Physical Activity and Nutrition Task Force (PANTF). In addition, DPH researched the efforts of other local governments and organizations to identify best practices and lessons learned relating to the implementation of food policies. The implementation plan integrates input from all these sources.

Summary of Key Implementation Steps

1) *Vending Machines*

Current vendors are not required to comply with the Food Policy under their existing contracts. However, current vendors will be encouraged to voluntarily comply. Compliance will be mandatory as part of the next round of Requests For Proposals (RFPs) and the next set of vending machine contracts. The plan proposes the following actions:

- Develop a list of sample healthy food and beverage items that can be sold in vending machines.
- Create an education campaign for employees on the Food Policy and the benefits of eating healthy.
- Encourage voluntary compliance among vendors by providing vendors with informational packets and offering them technical assistance and support.
- Conduct and evaluate a pilot study in two County buildings.
- Develop standard language to be used in vending machines contracts for the next round of RFPs that mandates compliance with the food policy.
- Monitor a sample of vending machines to capture the rate of compliance once the policy goes into effect.

2) *County-Sponsored Meetings*

One of the key findings from meetings and interviews with County staff is that County departments have limited opportunities to purchase food. The Board of Supervisors has greater authority to purchase food with County funds for County-related business and Commission meetings. The plan proposes the following actions:

- Develop educational materials about the food policy to inform County Department Heads and Board of Supervisor's staff who are involved with food purchases.
- Monitor the effectiveness of educational outreach efforts to assess whether key County employees are aware of and are complying with the food policy.
- Identify opportunities to promote healthy eating at large County-affiliated public events.

3) *Charitable Fundraising*

Unlike the two other components, the charitable fundraising guidelines are optional. The plan proposes the following actions:

- Develop an educational toolkit for County fundraising coordinators.
- Create a campaign to educate County employees about the charitable fundraising guidelines.

Implementation and Monitoring Plan for Los Angeles County Food Policy

Role of the Department of Public Health (DPH): While several County departments assume responsibility for different action steps in this implementation plan, DPH will provide general oversight. This oversight will include convening representatives from “lead” departments, as needed, to assess progress, as well as helping to convene key meetings necessary to carry out the activities included in this plan.

I. Food and Beverages Sold in County-Contracted Vending Machines

Food and beverage vending machines: Provides mandatory guidelines for foods and beverages sold in County-contracted food and beverage vending machines. These guidelines provide restrictions on the calorie, fat, saturated fat, *trans* fat, sodium, sugar and whole grain content of food items.

	Action	Lead/Participants	Start Date	End Date	Comments
1.	Create a list of all the County-contracted food and beverage vending machines, including which departments manage the contracts, who the vendors are, and the location of the vending machines.	<p style="text-align: center;">Lead: DPH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Participants: Vending Machine Workgroup Members: CAO-Real Estate Division, Parks and Recreation, Beaches and Harbors, Sheriff, Public Works, Probation (need to confirm), County Counsel, Healthy Eating Active Communities Initiative (HEAC)</p>	9/06	12/06	The Department of Public Health (DPH) will coordinate a Vending Machine Workgroup comprised of at least one representative from all County departments that manage vending machine contracts, representatives from DPH, and County Counsel. This Workgroup will play an advisory role to guide the implementation of the vending machine section of this implementation plan, including the identification of all County-contracted vending machines.
2.	Develop a list of sample food and beverage products that comply with the Food Policy’s nutrition	<p style="text-align: center;">Lead: DPH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Participants:</p>	10/06	12/06	DPH will analyze food and beverage items currently offered by vendors and additional items not currently offered by vendors to

	Action	Lead/Participants	Start Date	End Date	Comments
	guidelines.	Vending Machine Workgroup			identify food and beverages that comply with the nutrition guidelines in the Food Policy.
3.	Develop an informational packet for vendors who want to voluntarily comply with the Food Policy that explains the Food Policy and provides support materials.	Lead: CAO-Real Estate Division Participants: Vending Machine Workgroup	12/06	6/07	The informational packet shall include: a letter to vendors explaining the Food Policy, a sample list of approved food and beverage items (see #2 above), educational posters to hang on or next to vending machines.
4.	Educate employees and the public about the Food Policy.	Lead: DPH Participants: Vending Machine Workgroup	4/07	Ongoing	Develop educational materials for employees and the public explaining the healthy items in the vending machines. Send emails to Department managers about the policy, include information about the policy with employees' paychecks, write articles about the Food Policy for the County's in-house newsletters. Send out press releases to key newspapers in Los Angeles County, including papers tailored to specific ethnic communities.
5.	Identify current vendors willing to comply on a voluntary basis with the Food Policy.	Lead: CAO-Real Estate Division Participants: Vending Machine Workgroup	1/07	6/07	Departments with vending machine contracts will notify current vendors and determine if they would like to voluntarily comply with the Food Policy. Note: it is not a requirement that vendors under current vending machines contracts comply with the Food Policy. Compliance will be mandatory as part of the next RFP and the next set of contracts.

	Action	Lead/Participants	Start Date	End Date	Comments
6.	Provide technical assistance and support to current vendors who want to voluntarily comply with the Food Policy.	Lead: CAO-Real Estate Division Participants: Vending Machine Workgroup	6/07	Until current contracts expire	DPH will assist the CAO-Real Estate Division in coordinating support to County departments working with vendors who want to voluntarily comply with the Food Policy.
7.	Conduct and evaluate a pilot study of voluntary compliance in two County buildings.	Lead: DPH Participants: Vending Machine Workgroup	1/07	Until current contracts expire	In partnership with the Healthy Eating, Active Communities initiative, a County-community partnership to prevent childhood obesity, implement the Food Policy in two County buildings with vending machines. Conduct a baseline survey and evaluate the change in the number of healthy products offered.
8.	Write up lessons learned from the pilot study to be applied once the new vending machine contracts go into place.	Lead: DPH Participants: Vending Machine Workgroup	1/08	3/08	The Vending Machine Workgroup will talk with vendors and employees at the two pilot study sites to evaluate lessons learned and best practices.
9.	Develop standard language for the next round of vending machine Request For Proposals (RFPs) and contracts to include mandatory compliance with the Food Policy.	Lead: CAO-Real Estate Division Participants: Vending Machine Workgroup	11/06	4/07	DPH will obtain copies of other entities' bid solicitations, and seek guidance from the Public Health Law Project of the Public Health Institute, to obtain sample language used to mandate compliance with food policies. County Counsel will meet with the Vending Machine Workgroup to draft standardized language for bid solicitations and contracts.
10	Provide technical assistance and support to vendors to facilitate	Lead: CAO-Real Estate	6/07	Until current	DPH will assist the CAO-Real Estate Division in coordinating support to County departments

	Action	Lead/Participants	Start Date	End Date	Comments
	compliance with the Food Policy.	Division Participants: Vending Machine Workgroup		contracts expire	managing vending machine contracts.
11	Monitor a sample of vending machines to evaluate rates of compliance with the Food Policy, once all vending machines are under the new contracts that mandate compliance with the Food Policy. Conduct a baseline survey and follow-up survey of the vending machines in the sample.	Leads: Lead: DPH and CAO-Real Estate Division Participants: Vending Machine Workgroup	Once all new contracts are in place	Ongoing	A subset of vending machines will be selected to survey before and after the new contracts go into place, to monitor adherence to the Food Policy. The monitoring will assess that target milestone dates and percentages are met: <i>By January 1, 2007, 25% of all foods and 25% of all beverages in County-contracted vending machine within County facilities and offices will meet the guidelines detailed in the Los Angeles County Food Policy;</i> <i>By January 1, 2009, 33% of all foods and 33% of all beverages in County-contracted vending machine within County facilities and offices will meet the guidelines detailed in the Los Angeles County Food Policy;</i> <i>By January 1, 2011, 50% of all foods and 50% of all beverages in County-contracted vending machine within County facilities and offices must meet the guidelines detailed in the Los Angeles County Food Policy.</i> DPH will consult with the Public Health Institute and Samuels and Associates to identify standard methods for conducting baseline and follow-up studies involving vending machines.

	Action	Lead/Participants	Start Date	End Date	Comments
					DPH will provide trainings and organize staff to conduct the baseline and follow-up surveys.

II. Food Served at County-Sponsored Meetings

County-sponsored meetings and events: Requires all food and beverages purchased with County funds and served at County-sponsored meetings and events to comply with the nutrition guidelines contained in the Los Angeles County Food Policy.

	Action	Lead/Participants	Start Date	End Date	Comments
1.	Develop educational materials about serving healthy food and beverage choices at County-sponsored meetings and events.	Lead: DPH	1/07	3/07	DPH will develop educational materials for County employees about serving healthy food at County sponsored meetings and events. Create links on the Public Health website to sample approved menus and snack foods as tools to assist County employees who have permission to serve food at County-sponsored meetings or events.
2.	Educate employees about the requirement for food served at County-sponsored meetings and purchased with County funds to comply with the Food Policy.	Lead: DPH Participants: All County departments, Board of Supervisors	4/07	Ongoing	DPH will conduct outreach to inform County employees about this component of the Food Policy. Outreach efforts will include: a) Sending emails to Department Heads; b) Informing staff at the Board of Supervisors – Executive Offices and staff of the Board’s Commissions about the policy; c) Using in-house channels to inform staff, including sending information about the policy along with employees’ paychecks, writing articles about the Food Policy for the County’s in-house newsletters.
3.	Monitor the effectiveness of educational efforts to inform County employees about the Food Policy.	Lead: DPH	1/08	Ongoing	DPH will monitor its educational efforts and assess key County employees’ awareness about and compliance with the Food Policy.

	Action	Lead/Participants	Start Date	End Date	Comments
		Participants: All County departments, Board of Supervisors			At the following two milestone dates, January of 2009 and January of 2011, DPH will survey key staff regarding their awareness and compliance with the Food Policy. Monitoring results will be included in the 2009 and 2011 reports to the Board.
4.	Identify opportunities to promote healthy eating at large County-affiliated public events.	Lead: DPH	1/08	Ongoing	DPH will compile a list of large, public County-affiliated events, where non-County vendors supply food. DPH will assess the feasibility of integrating healthy eating choices into these events and implement, as possible.

III. Food Sold as Part of Workplace-Based Charitable Fundraising

Charitable Fundraising: Offers optional recommendations for foods sold for fundraising purposes based on the guidelines established in the food and beverage vending machine policy. Organizers of fundraisers are encouraged to choose healthier food options and non-food items to sell.

	Action	Lead/Participants	Start Date	End Date	Comments
1.	Develop an educational toolkit for Countywide fundraising coordinators.	Lead: DPH Participants: CAO-Office of Workplace Programs	1/08	3/08	DPH will research best practices in implementing charitable fundraising that involves the sale of non-food alternatives or healthy food items. Meet with charitable fundraising coordinators to solicit ideas for the toolkit. The toolkit will include a copy of the LA County Food Policy, a list of ideas of healthy foods or non-food items, a collection of resources to refer to for technical assistance.
2.	Educate Countywide charitable fundraising coordinators about the Food Policy and the charitable fundraising toolkit.	Lead: CAO-Office of Workplace Programs Participants: DPH	3/08	6/08	Send an email announcement to all County charitable fundraising coordinators explaining the charitable fundraising section of the Food Policy and encouraging coordinators to find ways in which their departments can participate. DPH will develop a list of fundraising ideas of healthy food and non-food items to be attached to the email. Present the educational toolkit at the annual March of Dimes coordinators' meeting hosted by the Office of Workplace Programs.
3.	Educate employees about the Food	Lead: DPH	4/08	Ongoing	DPH will develop an informational flyer to be

	<p>Policy's recommendations for charitable fundraising in the workplace.</p>	<p>Participants: CAO-Office of Workplace Programs</p>		<p>distributed to all County employees regarding charitable fundraising that involves the sale of non-food alternatives or healthy food items, as well as the importance of eating healthy and getting physical activity.</p> <p>DPH will draft an article highlighting the charitable fundraising section of the Food Policy. The article will be published in the "Workplace Connections" newsletter distributed by the Office of Workplace Programs.</p> <p>Encourage County employees to take part in physical activity fundraising events, such as the March of Dimes walk and the medical walks hosted by Los Angeles County hospitals.</p>
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